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CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

BY C. F. DETWILER.

Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. Jer. 6: 16. With the glory of God as the ultimate object in view, it is the aim of the writer, in this treatise, to present the subject of Christian baptism, with reference to mode, design, and qualifications of subjects, in the same light in which it was viewed by those to whom the faith and ordinances were first delivered, or as nearly so as he is able to present it.

To us, the question as to whether the subject is worthy of careful investigation presents itself in the language of the Savior: "Whence was it? from heaven or from men? We believe it to be from heaven, and therefore we believe it right to stand with our friendly readers where several ways meet, and "ask for the old paths, where is the good way?" Our human nature leads into error, and error is not confined to the ignorant. Advanced knowledge and research is used to support the various and conflicting doctrines of Christendom, showing to us that the guiding star that leads into all the truth may become dim to the learned as well as to the unlearned.

There are those who would discourage a careful investigation of the original form and design of Christian baptism, claiming that if God had been particular in reference to mode He would have had it plainly stated. To this we will state that there were precepts taught under the old dispensation, which were very plain at first, but afterwards became dim, at

times to the masses, by reason of traditions; and the same is true at this time in reference to some of the doctrines and practices of primitive Christianity, and among the subject of Christian baptism. Therefore the theory that would set aside investigation is not a good one, and the words of the text, teaching us to stand in the way, and see, and ask for the old paths, still reaches the disciples of Christ, and the subject of Christian baptism, even down to the present time. As long as there are men in the world who are "ever learning and never coming to the knowledge of truth," investigation is one of the duties of true discipleship. A man may be a learner all his lifetime and not be a disciple, but no one can be a true disciple without being a learner. While we cannot expect in this life to get beyond the limits of knowing in part, it is our privilege to measurably divest ourselves of the traditions and innovations which find their way into the church, by faithfully seeking after the truth, for the one great purpose of "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

The subject of Christian baptism embraces mode, design, and qualification of subjects. As we do not aim to treat it entirely separate under these several heads we will state the substance of our treatise in one proposition, namely:

Christian baptism, as first delivered to the saints, is composed of a specific act of faith and obedience by which true and penitent believers entered into the promised covenant relation with God, Jer. 31: 33, which covenant, sealed with the blood of the testator, Heb. 9: 11-17, secured to the saints of old, and still secures to us, the fullness of the blessings of a present salvation. Mark 16: 16, Acts 2: 38, 39

We will first give our reasons for believing that Christian baptism consisted in a certain act, or form, that if immersion was first taught, it was immersion only, and if the ordinance was first performed by sprinkling they did not have any to immerse. We are safe in stating that the only grounds on which immersion as Christian baptism ever rested, was the belief by those who taught and practiced it, that it alone was the form in which the ordinance was first delivered, and their doubts as to the equal validity of sprinkling or effusion. In the absence of this doubt, an entire immersion of the body, merely as a preference to having a few drops applied to the head of the candidate, would never have gained a foothold in any age or community. A change from the more humbling to the more dignifying, from the more difficult to the more convenient, has always been agreeable to human nature, and such were all the changes in the ordinance of Christian baptism that ever gained sufficient foothold to become general with any people, or to be handed down to successive generations. In view of these facts the simple fact that trine immersion was the almost universal practice for the first twelve hundred years is a strong evidence in favor of the practice.

There are some who think the expression in Acts 2: 2, 3, and the references to the same as baptism, Mark 1: 8, &c., favor pouring as a suitable form of Christian baptism.

In the above named baptism both pouring and immersion are plainly presented. Which of these two ideas appropriate the figure to the *literal* meaning of the word, must be determined by what we *know* the word to mean when used in a *literal* sense.

True figures must always be consistent in their meaning, with the literal meaning of the words employed. For illustration, we have the following language in Psa. 42: 7, "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water spouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." Here we learn from the *literal* meaning of the words used that the Psalmist was *overwhelmed* in sorrow and perplexities. A similar figure from the meaning of the word baptism is given in the language of the Savior in Luke 12: 50: "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." In the

above two figures the baptism or overwhelming was with sorrow, affliction or suffering, while in Acts 2: 2, 3, they were overwhelmed and filled with the Holy Ghost. While we do not offer these Scriptures as any weighty evidences in favor of immersion as Christian baptism, we aim to show that they are entirely consistent with and favorable to immersion. We aim, with God's help, to show first that all the figures, and all the sprinklings mentioned in the Bible when interpreted according to the Scriptures, are entirely consistent with our belief that immersion alone was primitive Christian baptism, and where baptism is mentioned either figurative or real, and any form is expressed, or plainly implied, it is represented as immersion, washing, burying or overwhelming, that sprinkling is no where represented as baptism, and that baptism is no where called sprinkling, that sprinkling when mentioned with reference to the Holy Ghost, and receiving the spirit ordinarily, is distinct from the abundant outpouring which is called the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

The communication of the spirit to man is represented as sprinkling, Isa. 52: 15, as pouring, and as "floods upon the dry ground," Isa. 44: 3, and as "rivers in the desert," Isa. 43: 19, 20. These are so many different representations of the workings of the spirit among men, but they cannot all represent baptism.

To see how and when these prophecies were fulfilled under the Gospel dispensation, and in what instances the receiving of the spirit was called baptism, and when it was not, we will refer first to Gal. 3: 2, where Paul asks the question, 'Received ye the spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?' As this question has reference to the ordinary way in which men receive the spirit, it would apply to us also, and our answer would be that we receive it by the hearing of faith. As the word of faith is communicated by preaching, and falls on the congregation syllable after syllable, it is fitly represented as sprinkling, and in this way representatives of "many nations" and tongues were so miraculously sprinkled on the day of Pentecost, but all this *after the baptism of the Holy Ghost had taken place, 'was noised abroad' and 'the multitude came together.'*

By comparing these scriptures with Matt. 3:11 and Mark 1:8, it is easy to see that the great outpouring of the Holy Ghost, which came as a sound from heaven and filled all the house where they were sitting, was the baptism referred to by John, while the ordinary imparting of the Spirit by the preaching of the faith, or by the laying on of hands, Acts 2:38, 8:15, 9:17, 19:6, Rom. 8:15, 2 Cor. 10:4, and Gal. 3:2, is in none of these passages called a baptism.

We do not mention these Scriptures for the amount of evidence they contain in favor of any mode of baptism, but because many of our friends place stress upon them as favoring sprinkling or pouring for baptism.

The ceremonies of the Old Testament requiring sprinkling for cleansing are supposed by some to correspond to Christian baptism under the Gospel dispensation. These ceremonies are mentioned in Lev. 8:30, 14:27 Num. 19:12. In connection with these we will also notice those requiring a washing of the body, Lev. 11:39, 40, 15:13, 17:15, Num. 19:7, 10, 19 and Dent. 23:10, 11, and we can see whether those requiring sprinkling, or those requiring a washing of the body, correspond to Christian baptism. Both of these ceremonies differed some from Christian baptism, as the bathing was done by the person to be cleansed, and the sprinkling was never done with pure water, but blood or the ashes of a heifer was always mixed with it. Num. 19:210 gives the directions for making the water of separation. Paul mentions these things as having a shadow of good things to come, Heb. 10:2, and in speaking of the good things, he expressly mentions the things under the gospel dispensation corresponding to both the sprinkling and the washing. Of the sprinkling he says: "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God". Heb. 9:13, 14. In conclusion of the same he says: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus, * * * Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil con-

science, and our bodies washed with pure water." Heb. 10:19-22.

We will next notice the words used in different languages to express the act of Christian baptism.

The Language in which John the baptist preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, and in which the evangelist first preached the good news, was most likely the Hebrew, and *tabal* was the Hebrew word for baptize. In Buck's theological dictionary *tabal* is considered a generic word, but no proof is given to sustain the supposition, which could easily be done if it were well sustained by facts; and so far as we have yet learned, we have no grounds to doubt that it had as definite and specific a meaning as *dip* has in English.

Barnes (Presbyterian) in his notes on the New Testament defines *tabal* to *dip*, and refers for its rendering to Leviticus 14:51 where the priest was commanded to dip the cedar, wood, the scarlet, the hyssop, and the living bird, into the blood of the slain bird, for the cleansing a house of the plague of leprosy, and then follows with a lengthy explanation to show that *tabal* in this Scripture most likely means less than immersion, which we will readily admit might have been the case, and most likely was, unless the blood of the slain bird was put in water, as the blood of cleansing was in other ceremonies. But however this may have been the bottom fact still remains, namely, that *tabal*, means *dip*, and *tabal* is the Hebrew word for baptize.

The inconsistency of using the word *tabal* with reference to Christian baptism, with such latitude of meanings as to include sprinkling or tinging can easily be seen.

I may dip the tip of my finger in water, and that to moisten or sprinkle, but if I apply the word as baptize is always applied when speaking of water baptism, and as *tabal* was applied in reference to the same ordinance, that is, to the name of the person to be baptized, in commanding one person to baptize another, no one would understand me to mean that the administrator should dip the tip of his finger in the water, and sprinkle, or moisten the head of the person to be dipped.

Therefore if *tabal* means to dip, as Mr. Barnes admits, then *tabal* when applied to Christian baptism meant to dip the person to

be baptized.

This also agrees with the use of the word *tabal* to designate Jewish proselyte baptism, which also was performed by immersing the proselyte in water. They dipped the *candidate*, not the *finger*. The next word we will notice is the Greek word baptize. The New Testament, according to the records, was first written in Greek, with the exception of Matthew's Gospel. It is said to have been written first in Hebrew, and soon after translated into the Greek, which was the prevailing language in a great portion of the provinces where the Gospel was first preached.

The word baptizo is derived from baptō to dip. While *baptō* means to dip without reference to repetition, baptize belongs to a class of Greek called frequentatives, which denote repeated action, and are known by their ending in *eo*.

A similar class of verbs are also found in the Latin language, and it seems the early Latin fathers who translated baptizo, by the Latin frequentative *mergit* understood it to be frequentative in its nature. (See Stein and Ray debate Steins 4th Neg.) With this agree its definitions "to dye" "to wash" which is generally done by repeated dipping, or repeated action.

The frequentative nature of baptize which is claimed for it by most standard lexicons and is denied by more, is also sustained by its use in the Holy Scriptures. In the *Septuagint* (Greek version of the Old Testament,) the word baptō is used where no repetition is implied and baptizo in one of its forms is used when repeated action is implied or expressed.

For examples, "He *dipped* (ebapse) his finger in the blood." Levit. 9:9. "Shall dip (bapsei) thou and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed." Levit. 14:6 ("Ebapse" and "bapsei" are forms of baptō.) "Naaman dipped, (ebaptisato) himself seven times in Jordan (2 5:14) ("Ebaptisato" is a form of baptizo.)

It may be noticed in the above quotations that the verbs in the Greek like in the German, only more so, have many more forms marking their inflections in words tenses numbers persons &c, than the English. I have also frequently heard it remarked, that the Greek language is rich in words and in

flexions expressive of fine points of difference in meaning, and it certainly has an ample stock to express all the various modes of applying water or other liquids, and for this reason it does not seem that there should be any difficulty in arriving at a pretty definite knowledge of the manner in which baptism was first administered.

Other words used in the Scriptures are *louo* to wash, having reference to the whole body, *nipō* to wash a part of the body, as hands, or feet, *pluo* to wash clothes, and *rantizo*, to sprinkle. In John 13:10 we have, "He that is washed, (leloumenos, from *louo*,) needeth not save to wash, (nipsasthai, from *nipō*,) his feet." We will next notice the words in other languages by which baptizo has been translated.

In King James' translation into the English, with which we are all acquainted, the word baptizo was simply anglicised, but in the *American Bible Union* translation it was translated immerse, and in Wilson's *Emphatic Diaglot* the same. In Martin Luther's German translation it is rendered *tauf*. The definition of *tauf* (a verb) is to dip, to immerse, to baptize. *Taufe*, (noun) baptism. The synonyms of the verb *taufen* are *eintaufen*, *tauchen*, and *eintauchen*. The literal rendering of *taufen* or *tauchen* is to *dip*, and of *eintaufen* and *eintauchen*, to *dip in*. A similar difference of form is shown between the English words *merge* and *immerge*. The meaning is about the same. Our Pennsylvania Germans do not use the word *tauf* *tauf* or *taufen* except when speaking of baptism as they understand it, and then they apply it as we do baptize, regardless of mode: but *taufen* had a meaning before it was placed in the German Testament, and that meaning as defined by all German dictionaries, is to dip, or immerse. Martin Luther in his practice retained the same form of baptism that he had first received in the Romish church, but he was a scholar, well versed in the original languages, and his translation of the Bible into the German language is generally acknowledged as a faithful work.

The same rendering is also found in Froshan's German translation, which is somewhat older than Luther's. The only place I know of the word *tauf* being used in Martin Luther's German Bible, except with reference

to Christian baptism is in 2 Kings 5:14 where Naaman went down and dipped (taufete) himself seven times in Jordan. Another translation in which I have noticed the rendering of baptizo is in a Dutch New Testament in the possession of brother Sharp, in which it is translated by the Dutch word doop. The Dutch is closely related to the German, and the word doop is defined, doop, to dip, to baptize, to christen, and vulgarly to nickname. Strip it of the definition it received by its use to express the ordinance of baptism, or christening, and you have left what it signified before it was put into the Dutch Testament, namely doop to dip, to nickname. Dooper, dipper, baptizer. Johannes der dooper, John the Baptist, or John the dipper. If John had baptized by sprinkling he would have been Johannes der Besprenger.

(To be Continued.)

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

BY C. F. DETWILER.

(Continued.)

It is true that many ancient writings and even Bibles have been burned, and some have suffered at the hands of interpolators, but there have been too many thousands of faithful witnesses in all ages, for all their records to have been injured by the enemies of the cross, and a great array of reliable records still point to the paths our Fathers trod through all the dark valleys of persecution to the days of the apostle, and endear the records of the faithful, despite the errors which crept in among them at times, to the hearts of Christian people. The *Martyr's Mirror*, compiled by the Dutch historian, Thielem I Von Bracht, has been translated into the German, and English, and is generally circulated among the Mennonite brethren. It traces their present doctrines and practices, with few exceptions, through the churches of the "Recht gläubigen," under their various names, to the apostle. And not the least prominent among the practices recorded, is their practice in the ordinance of baptism.

The *Martyr's Mirror* was compiled after the trine immersion of the ancient Waldenses

had been changed in some of the Mennonite churches, but by no means in all of them, to the trine effusion generally practiced among them at the present time. The compiler was not an immersionist, and his numerous references to the baptism of the ancients were for the purpose of tracing their antipedobaptist views through the ancient churches of orthodox believers to the apostles. Nearly all his references to baptism where mode is mentioned or implied, represent it as dipping, burying, or washing. But among others it contains one passage from the writings of Tertulian, by which some of our Mennonite brethren sometimes call in question our authority for immersion. The rendering in substance, from the German is, "We are thrice immersed, answering somewhat more than the Lord has commanded in the Gospel." But it is taken from the Latin, and another English rendering is, "We are thrice immersed, making somewhat an ampler pledge than the Lord commanded." While the phrase "answering more," or "making somewhat an ampler pledge," is supposed by some to deny Gospel authority for immersion; some of our single immersion friends apply it to the number of actions and use it in defense of single immersion. Others, who are well acquainted with Tertulian's writings, claim that neither of these interpretations are consistent with his writings, and that the "ampler pledge" has reference to unwarrantable questions and answers, and traditions, which were used in connection with baptism among his people. T. T. Von Bracht, in speaking of immersion as the baptism of the primitive Christians, which is sustained by his references throughout the entire work, says: "This mode of baptizing, which by the ancients was called immersion, or submersion, has been preserved very long, yea, even up to the present time, especially by the people in the eastern and southern countries, who understood that by the Greek words, *baptisma*, (baptism) and *baptizo* (to baptize,) a total immersion or submersion in the water was meant; but it has been discovered that according to the idiom of the Greek language, these words do not only signify immersion, or submersion, but also washing, or sprinkling with water." *Martyr's Mirror*, German

edition of 1814, p 145. These people of "the eastern and southern countries who understood the Greek word *baptizo* to mean to immerse," included the nations speaking the Greek language, embracing many millions. They read the commission of Matt. 28 : 19 as it was written down by the New Testament writers, in their own mother tongue, they *always* understood it to teach *trine* immersion, and practiced accordingly.

But after Pope Gregory had decreed, A. D. 405, that single immersion should be valid, and after the same single immersion several hundred years later was changed to sprinkling, first by the Roman Catholic church, and afterwards by others, then it was "discovered" (?) not by the Greeks, but by the Spanish, French, German, and English, that sprinkle is also a literal definition of *baptizo*. "But from the beginning it was not so." Our belief that *trine* immersion was taught by Christ and the apostles as Christian baptism, is fully sustained by the testimonies of the early writers, who are extensively cited by our friends of single immersion, to sustain immersion itself against sprinkling, as well as by our Mennonite brethren in tracing adult baptism to the apostles.

While single immersionists have freely used the testimony of the early church fathers to support their practice, when in discussion with the advocates of sprinkling, among the formidable weapons used by the latter in self-defense, with considerable of the air of "Physician, heal thyself," is the fact that these same witnesses support nothing short of *trine* immersion. To counteract this part of the testimony of these witnesses, some have classed *trine* immersion with infant baptism, infant communion, the administering of milk and honey, and other post apostolic practices. But this disposition of *trine* immersion can not be sustained by the facts and records. While these ancient witnesses attribute *trine* immersion to the teaching of the commission, the same can not be said of the other named traditions, and even single immersion, in the first records we have of it, is condemned by them as an innovation. We will here give a quotation in support of our statement in reference to the testimony of

the early fathers, which we take as it stands in the *Stein and Ray Debate* :

"The baptismal formula was understood by the primitive Greeks to require *trine* immersion. * * * a. 'Theodoret,' says Bingham, 'charges Eunomius as making an innovation on the original institution of baptism delivered by Christ and the Apostles, in that he made a contrary law that men should not be baptized by three immersions, nor with an invocation of the Trinity.' Antiqs of the Chr. Ch. 1, page 540, 'b,' Pelagius condemns the single immersion of Eunomius as 'contrary to the Gospel given by Christ, who appointed every one to be baptized * * with three immersions, saying to his disciples, 'Go, baptize all nations in the name of the Father,' &c. Ibid, 'c,' Gregory Nyssa says, 'Eunomius perverted the law of Christ * * and taught that baptism was not to be given in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, as Christ commanded.' Ibid 1, p. 487. 'd,' Chrysostom says: 'Christ delivered to his disciples, 'one baptism' in three immersions of the body, when he said to them, 'Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.' Ibid 1, p. 540, 'e' Jerome commenting on Eph. 4 : 5, says, 'We are thrice dipped in water, that the mystery of the Trinity may appear to be but one, and therefore though we be thrice put under water to represent the mystery of the Trinity, yet it is reputed but 'one baptism.' Chrysostom's History of the modes of Bap. p. 72, 73. Jerome understood Paul's 'one baptism' to be *trine*. 'F,' Monulus, about A. D. 256 says: 'The doctrine of our holy mother, the Catholic church, has always, my brethren, been with us, and doth still abide with us, and especially the article of baptism, and the *trine* immersion wherewith it is celebrated, our Lord having said, 'Go ye, and baptize the Gentiles in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.' Work of Cyprian 1, p. 240."

(We will notice here that the term 'Catholic' as used by Monulus, does not have reference to the corrupted Roman Catholic Church, but it means *general*, and was applied to the general body of orthodox believers in the early ages of the church.)

"These distinguished Greeks of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, read the Greek commission in their native tongue, as it first stood in the sacred canon. They tell us it requires baptism into *each* name of the Trinity. If my friend will adduce just *one* ancient Greek, who says it don't teach trine immersion, I will give up these six witnesses for his one."—*Stein and Ray debate*. The Stein and Ray debate continued in two weekly periodicals for about a year after the above statement was made, but brother Stein's "friend" never adduced the *one* opposing witness, though he *claimed* to find one to sustain single immersion, in the person of Paul the Apostle. Mr. Ray is a learned historian, and the author of a church history, but he was not able to sustain his assertions in which he claimed that trine immersion was post apostolic, even by *one* ancient witness in *any* language or nationality.

Some of our friends of single immersion suppose trine immersion to have begun with the ancient Greeks. But this supposition is contradicted by their own best historians. Orchard (Baptist) says of the second century, "Although unwarrantable customs and ceremonies began to prevail at the conclusion of this century in some churches, yet the ordinances of religion were not altered from their Scriptural subject, which is supported by the best historians, as it does not appear by any approved authors that there was any mutation or variation in baptism from the former century." Mag. cent. 2, Orchard's History of Foreign Bap. page 26.

(To be Continued.)

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

BY C. F. DEWILDER.

Of the third century Orchard says, "The most respectable historians affirm that no evidence exists of any alteration as to the subject or mode of baptism during the third century. We have no testimony as to any alteration as to the rite of baptism," Mag. cent. 3." "They generally dipped them thrice in water." Du Pin's Hist. cent. 3.

J. M. Cramp, (Baptist) in a catechism on baptism published in 1865, in answering the question, "In what manner was baptism administered in the early ages of the church?" answers, "It was immersion; and not only so, but trine immersion," and then refers to Tertulian and others. It must be remembered, too, that not much was written on the manner of baptizing during the first three centuries from the simple fact that "There existed a harmony among the churches on the mode and subject of baptism and all parties were regulated by the Scriptures." Orchard's Hist. of Bap. page 38, 39.

It should also be remembered that in the first accounts we have of trine immersion it was represented as the general practices of the churches in all Christendom, while in the first accounts we have of single immersion it was condemned as an innovation. These two facts we can safely challenge the world to refute.

Tertulian flourished at the beginning of the third century, that is about the year 200 A. D. He was born about sixty years after John, the last of the apostles, died. In his time trine immersion was the general practice in all Christendom, and none of the early writers who first made mention of it, knew that it had ever been otherwise. Single immersion had a much longer struggle for respectable recognition than infant baptism. In reference to forward or backward action we have very little on record in the Gospel. We believe that Paul was speaking of water baptism in Rom. 6: 5. Water baptism symbolizes both the death and burial of the "old man," and the resurrection of the new. Another fact which is not fully accepted by all,

is, that in baptism the penitent believer enters into a covenant relation with God in Christ. It is the rite by which his wedlock with Christ is *legalized*, as we aim to show hereafter. It was in view of this fact we believe, that Paul used the phrases, "baptized into Jesus Christ," and "united with him by the likeness of his death." (Revised edition.) Baptism is an outward form, presenting, as we believe, an outward likeness to his death. "He bowed his head and gave up the ghost," John 19: 30. In the likeness of which we bow our heads in baptism, symbolizing both the death of our Savior and the crucifixion of the "old man." We may also add to this, the testimony of historical records. "Monuments of antiquity represent John with his right hand . . . bowing the head of Jesus forward into the water to baptize him." Rob. Hist. of Bap. p. 500, 501, Judson on Bap. p. 114. Dr Jeter (Baptist) giving an account of his visit to the catacomb of San-Ponziana at Rome, one of the cemeteries of the early martyrs, describes its ancient baptistry, which he thinks "dates back to the second century," as "about four feet long, three feet wide, and three or four feet deep." He alludes to the forward posture as the only manner in which the ordinance could be conveniently performed in a baptistry constructed as this one is." Relig. Her. Mar. 1873. Dr. Robison says, "The very plain manner in which they (the English Baptists) baptize is in a high degree of probability in their favor; but they appear to have varied a little from the original form, which, however, the free constitution of their churches allows them any day to alter. . . . They baptize transversely by laying a person backward under water," &c. Rob. Hist. of Bap. London edition, p. 545.

Dr. Judson says: "Immersion, however, maintained its ground until the middle of the seventeenth century, when the Westminster assembly of divines voted, by a majority of one, that immersion and sprinkling were indifferent. Previous to that period, the Baptists had formed churches in different parts of the country; and having always seen infants, when baptized, taken in the hands of the administrator and laid under the water

in the baptismal font, and not having much, if any, communication with the Baptists on the Continent, they thought, of course, that a candidate for baptism, though a grown person, should be treated in the same manner, and laid backwards under the water. They were probably confirmed in this idea by the phrase, 'buried in baptism.' The consequence has been that all the Baptists in the world, who have sprung from the English Baptists, have practiced the backward posture. But from the beginning it was not so. In the apostolic times the administrator placed his right hand on the head of the candidate, who then, under the pressure of the administrator's hand, bowed forward, aided by that gentle flexion which instinctively comes to one's aid when attempting to bow in that position, until his head was submerged, and then rose by his own effort." Judson on Bap. page 112, 113" Stein & Ray Debate.

The above testimony is all from learned historians well acquainted with ancient history. Their statements were not fragmentary bits culled out to suit their sectarian views, but well established facts to which their testimony was in a number of instances better than the practices of the churches which they represented, and they form a strong array of historical testimony to what we believe to be the teaching of the great commission, and the practice of primitive Christianity.

It teaches the great and universal truth that human nature always tends to declension. Declension and reformation is the record of man in every age of the world's history. He is not satisfied with ever changing that which his own hands have fashioned, and which never arrives at perfection; but he would fain use his faulty genius to improve on the oracles of the Almighty, and reach forth his unhallowed hands to steady the ark of God. Therefore it behooves every disciple of Christ to take heed to his own ways in reference to *every* Gospel doctrine, to stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way? to plant his feet on the foundation of truth, and with charity for all and malice toward none, to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.
